

Mr. Cole,

I'm writing to you to re-consider the recent decision by your department to close Area 13/Helm Point to Camino Point. My two points are as follow:

A. I read the study when it was posted on your website and nothing, absolutely nothing suggest that the area is under threat and therefore it requires a drastic measure such as a close down for outfitters and guides. In fact, the study shows quite the contrary; the area is underutilized. So, WHY closing it down? Please tell me that there is a better reason for such decision other than after all the money spent in the study we need to appear to be doing something? when you in fact can be doing something for everyone, such as capping at the right (based on the study) number of visitors for future use? please tell me that you have in fact, considered the Greater Good: the American people that come from ALL over the country to visit these public lands during their hard earned vacation? or could it be that you have prioritize the private interest of a few local residents that wouldn't like to see too many crab pots near these shores, for which you have no jurisdiction over it, anyway? or discriminate visitors from visiting certain areas during the weekend so that locals can enjoy it for themselves?

I'm a AK resident and I'm about to visit Yellowstone National Park with my family in a few weeks. When we get there, we will be visitors and we get to enjoy these amazing public lands, thanks to the US Forest Service Department. We, visitors fully understand the importance of your work in managing these public lands, that is why we happily pay all fees associated with visiting the Park. Because we know that the money goes towards paying all of your salaries, studies, and ultimately managing wisely these vast lands for everyone's enjoyment. Please tell me you haven't lost sight of this while drafting this regulation ?

B. A decision like this can and will put small business in the area out of business overnight, which undoubtedly create a negative ripple effect easy to predict. For one if more of these small outfitters abandon the area due to the inability to use this land, the city and/or borough taxes for those business will cease to collect, they will stop using the retail stores for their business needs, they will cease to pump gas at the Marinas, you will not collect your fee arising from their business, they stop participating in your wilderness courses, they will ceased to participate in random drug testing a program that pays our USCG, and so on and so forth. This is why they call small business the backbone economy of towns such as Ketchikan. In the meantime, larger business can continue to operate in accordance with their often more aggressive plan. Your regulations don't affect them, they are "too big to fail" you always seems to have this in mind when drafting such regulations. Honestly, if you go with the bid option for applying for permits in 2013, who do you think will win that one? the small outfitter with a capacity of 6 visitors?, that by the way pay their due, brake no rule, caused no major environmental impact in the area and contribute greatly to the town's economy. At the very least all I'm asking is that you level the playing field in which small outfitters who has been consistent with their operating plan for 10 years or longer stand a chance. You have the resources to make this happen, you just have to have us in mind in the same way you notice the larger operations.

I do hope you re-consider this unfounded decision not only because it strangles small business that pays (with their permit fee to use these lands) your department and the effort to manage these Public Lands, but most importantly because it undermines the very core of your existence as a US federal department: managing these lands for EVERYONE to enjoy.

I also hope you will not disregard this letter as another disgruntled American unhappy with the Government. I happen to have the upmost respect for the government and its agencies as I have worked in the past as an interpreter for a government agency. I am too well aware of the everyday hard work done by people like you and myself in the past, yes true, it often goes unnoticed. I, too felt under appreciated every time I heard regular citizens speak with such disdain for the government and its function. But at the end of the day the only question I ask myself was: did I do what I supposed to do for the good of the American people? I believe answering that question positively whether one works to guarantee the safety of the public or to guarantee their recreational freedom is the very essence of the Government and its departments.

Respectfully yours,

Miriam

(just one voice for the many who will be affected by this decision, I speak for both group as a business owner in the area but ALSO for my future clients, regular hard working american folks that visit this part of Alaska and will not longer have access to these areas)



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Forest
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Alaska Region
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File Code: 1570

Dear Miriam:

This is in regard to the appeal you filed on the Ketchikan Misty Fiord Outfitter and Guide Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision (ROD) which was assigned Appeal No. 12-10-05-0006 A215. The ROD was signed by the Jeffrey DeFreest, the Ketchikan-Misty Fiords District Ranger.

There is no documentation in the planning record for the KMRD O/G EIS project indicating that you submitted comments or otherwise expressed an interest in the project during the comment period. As stated in Forest Service regulations, at 36 CFR 215.13(a), and in the July 14, 2011, legal notice in the Ketchikan Daily News for this project, only those individuals and organizations who submit comments during the 45-day comment period for a project may appeal that project. Therefore, I am required to dismiss your appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.16(a)(6).

Sincerely,

/s/ Forrest Cole
FORREST COLE
Forest Supervisor

